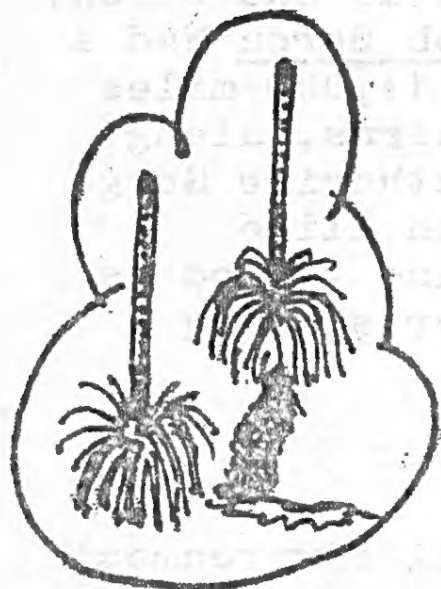


BALLARAT FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

EXCURSION/NEWS SHEET - MARCH 1977.



President: Mr. G. Binns Ph. 323670
Secretary: Mrs. M. Rotheram 301671
Treasurer: Mr. S. Reynolds 327721

MEETINGS held in the Biology Section at the School of Mines, Lydiard St. Sth. at 8 p.m., first Friday of each month.

4th MARCH: Annual Meeting. Election of Office Bearers for 1977. Speaker - Miss M. White of Anglesea.

1st APRIL: Speaker - Mr. Edgar Whitburn.

EXCURSION 6th MARCH: Ross Creek Block, Enfield Forest. Leader Mr. J. Brisbane. Cars leave Crockers Corner 1.30 p.m.

EXCURSION 3rd APRIL: Nerrin Nerrin Swamps. Leader J. Clements.

MEMBERSHIP FEES are now due and payable to the Treasurer - Adult \$1.50. Full time student 50c.

Also the News Sheet is still being mailed out to members who request it. \$1.80 annual postage, paid to co-editor, Mrs. B. Gray, 501 Ligar St. Ballarat.

The box on the table is to collect 5c. from each member at each meeting to provide postage of the news sheet to other Field Naturalist Clubs within our area. Thank you!

A syllabus of Meetings and Excursions has been drawn up for the year, and should be available at the April meeting.

FEBRUARY MEETING: Three new members were welcomed at the monthly meeting on 4th February, namely John Cousins, Stuart and Jude Porteous. We hope you will spend many happy and constructive years with the club.

As it was Member's Night, we were privileged to view slides shown by three excellent photographers.

Mrs. S. Bedggood showed various orchid slides taken by Miss McNabb; then some of her own in the rain forests of Queensland, and the Bora Rings used by early aboriginals for their rituals near the Glass House Mountains. A set of slides showing the antics of a bower bird in his bower were most interesting.

Ken Hammond's slides were on his travels to Wyperfeld National Park, Phillip Island, Eildon and the Victorian Alps; including excellent photos of wildflowers, orchids and birds.

Judging by the variety of country seen, Bob Borch had a tight schedule to fulfill on his three months, 11,000 miles trip several years ago. From the tropics of Cairns, along the Barkly and Stuart Highways to Darwin, to Katherine Gorge and the Ord River scheme, then to Ayers Rock and Alice Springs, his slides showed just how wonderful and varied is the country in which we live. Thank you all for sharing your travels with us.

ANGLESEA VISIT

The February excursion to study the coastal environment at Anglesea was not only superbly planned by our leader Miss Mary White, but she also arranged perfect weather. Some 20 members and visitors attended.

The itinerary began with an inspection of the ironbark basin and stringybark forest at Point Addis and the clifftop ecology. Members interested in botany had a particularly good field day with numerous interesting species. Plants in flower included lobelia, hyacinth orchid, prickly geebung, purple fringe lily, with a "garden" of plants on the cliffs, including white correa, moonah, rounded noon-flower, pomaharris and many others. We also visited an aboriginal midden in a sheltered gully, where birds took to the scrub on the trail of a suspected bristle bird.

At Point Roadknight we inspected the reclamation and conservation work on the dunes and made a study of seaweeds and other marine life along the back beach. A strange find was the skull of a short-tailed shearwater - and further along, the mysteriously headless body.

Highlight of the day was a visit to Miss White's home to see her comprehensive collection of some hundreds of botanical and marine paintings and specimens from the Anglesea area. Beautifully mounted on charts and display boards, the collection covered three rooms - one for plants and shrubs, one for orchids and her extensive library, and the other for seaweed, shells and marine creatures.

Miss White is providing a wonderful service to visitors interested in natural history and to the school children who are fortunate enough to visit her on excursions. We are looking forward to hearing her speak on Angair, the Anglesea-Airey's Inlet Society, of which she is secretary.

(M. Rotheram)

The President asks.....

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

With the conclusion of another year of activity it is timely that we should review the achievements of the Club, preferably with reference to our stated objectives that are in fact ever present with each of us on one section of the syllabus card.

No doubt there has been involvement in relevant issues that have required sustained attention and timely action. Further submissions to the Land Conservation Council on land useage in the Mallee, a submission on our neighbouring region the Corangamite Block, and the preparation of submissions to support deputations on the Clunes Swamp cause to two Ministers and eventually the Premier have all been exercises to test our resources. These tasks are undertaken by working parties from within our ranks. The future is going to reveal many more problems from which will develop the need for action by scientists and naturalists, particularly those who carry out field work in specific areas.

In the Ballarat region we will soon be confronted with the need to consider proposals for the future use of areas that contain a wealth of natural flora and fauna and perhaps to contemplate on the restoration of other areas needed to ensure the posterity of some element of natural heritage.

I urge you all to consider this prospect as much necessary work must be undertaken by field naturalists. I would suggest that it is imperative that each member should aim to equip her/him self in some way to be able to assist in surveying and recording data which may be used beneficially when submissions are required. Further, I suggest that each member adopt a study of a particular branch of the sciences within our sphere of concern, e.g. a form of plant life, birds, insects, etc., seek out the necessary assistance and gear for the field studies and set about developing knowledge in your chosen study.

True, it is most pleasing to be able to enjoy the

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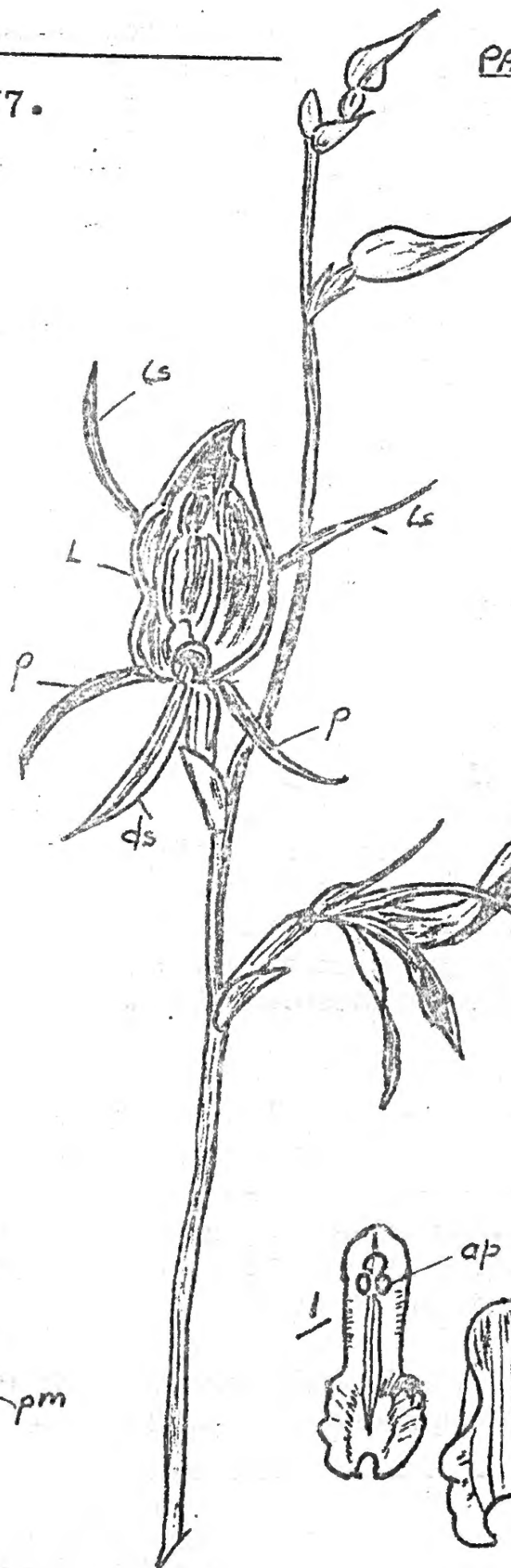
SUMMER FLOWERING ORCHIDS OF THE BALLARAT DISTRICT.

The following are some of the orchids to be found blooming during the months of December and January.

1. Calochilus robertsonii (bearded orchid) A curious fragile late flowering bearded orchid. Dr. J. Willis forwarded a specimen to Mr. Don Baxell Sydney, who identified it as a form of *C. robertsonii*, not *C. gracillimus* which is found only in Queensland and N.S.W. Rare.
2. Orthoceras strictum (horned orchid) Leaves narrow with two or three stem bracts. Green to yellowish flowers almost sessile. Flower bracts erect. Inflorescence up to 60 cm high. Petals with notched tips hidden under dorsal sepals. Labellum reddish brown. Two sepals stand out like horns. Rare.
3. Prasophyllum brevilabre (short lipped leek orchid) Leaf lamina loosely sheathing. Flower green with red to brown markings. White labellum sometimes tinged pink. Petals spreading, crisped at edges. More or less sessile labellum reflexed at middle. Two upper segments joined almost at the tip. Very rare.
4. Spiculaea huntiana (elbow orchid) Plant leafless. Stem purple to green. Two to six strangely shaped flowers. Labellum articulated by a movable claw to a linear projection of the column. Labellum very hairy at base. Widespread.
5. Cryptostylis subulata (large tongue orchid) Large lance shaped leaf. Stem strong. Red and brown labellum much larger and broader than all the other segments. Localised.
6. Pterostylis falcata (sickle greenhood) Four or five basal leaves. Solitary white to green large flower. Galea curving forward and extending at the apex to a long decurved filaform point. Lower sepals erect with long threadlike tips. Localised.
7. Gastrodia sesamoides (potato orchid) Brown stem rather succulent and scaly, up to 18" high. Flowers bulging and bell shaped, coloured brown with white at apex. Rare.
8. Spiranthes australis (Austral lady's tresses) Plant robust. Leaves narrow and grasslike. Stem up to 18" high. Small pink fragrant flowers arranged spirally up to the stem. Rare.

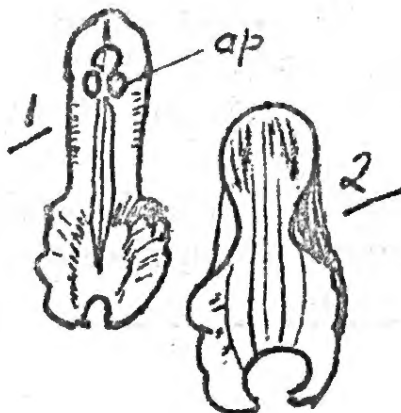
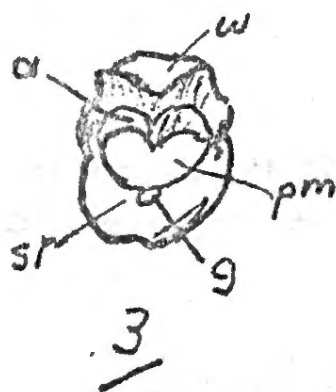
S.B. 1977.

PARTS OF AN ORCHID



ds dorsal sepal
 ls lateral sepal
 p Petal
 L labellum
 a anther
 ap appendage
 st stigma
 g gland
 pm pollen masses
 ou ovary
 w wing of column

1 Labellum from above
 2 Labellum from below
 3 Column from front (enlarged)



CRYPTOSTYLIS subulata

{ Kryptos, hidden;
 stylos, the column

outdoors and our "nature studies" as a purely recreational activity with minimum effort and application. But perhaps this is a luxury we cannot afford at all times if we are to accept the full implications of our objectives. The inevitable changes to the environment with the progressive 'development' of our surroundings may well render these objectives obsolete.

To fulfil the proposals outlined above I see the solutions in the enlistment of aid through involving other interested people, and in personal resolutions to immediately undertake development of expertise.

Contribute if you can !

Greg. Binns.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMP-OUT

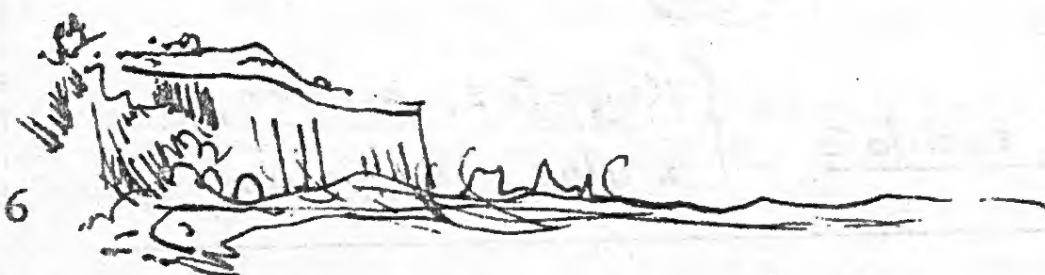
Mid-Murray will host the first W.V.F.N.C.A. Camp-Out for 1977 on Anzac weekend April 23 - 25 at "Macropus Park" Appin, about 17 km from Kerang. This is an environmental study centre being set up by former Fisheries and Wildlife Officer Mr. George Hardwick. There are camping facilities, hostel type accommodation and a meeting hall on the site.

This should be a very good camp so keep the weekend free. Full details will be announced in the next news letter.

AUGUST W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMP-OUT - Colac - 27th/28th August -
Otway Wattles.

★ Don't forget the W.V.F.N.C.A. Camp-Out at Glen Cromie Park, Drouin, next week-end, March 12th - 14th. Details in February newsletter or from Secretary.

★ Also our own Club's "Sherbrook River Lodge" Camp-Out in the Princetown - Port Campbell area, 25th - 27th March.



BALLARAT FIRE No. 1. Ross Creek Area.

The area burnt on 22nd December 1976 was used for hardwood utilisation, bee farming and recreation. It was to have been managed in this way for all time.

To protect the area the Forests Commission was carrying out a fuel reduction plan, on a three year basis. The first year reduction burn had been carried out in October 1976.

Results of the wild fire on 22nd December 1976 were long term deterioration of valuable timber stands, immediate problems for bee farming, short term inconvenience for recreation, and the complete destruction of the forest canopy, understorey and ground cover, which provided habitat for insects and wildlife. It will take years for complete regeneration to take place.

On 22nd December 1976 temperature at 3 p.m. was 34.5 c, wind direction north, wind velocity 18 km per hour, and relative humidity 19%. Under existing fuel condition, fire danger was at a very high rating.

The fire was reported at 12.50 p.m. on private property. After the fire crossed the Ross Creek - Smythesdale road it was hoped that the fire could be controlled when it approached the fuel reduced area, but unfortunately one third of the front passed into private property containing a high volume of forest litter. This acted as a corridor and allowed the fire to "spot" into the valuable Ross Creek block. Once into this untreated section, the fire burnt at the rate of $1/3 - \frac{1}{2}$ km per hour, until evening conditions, when with the use of back burning from prepared dozer lines, the fire was contained.

Complete control was effected at 4 p.m. 23rd December 1976 after 2,500 hectares and approximately \$188,000 of timber had been destroyed.

On our excursion to the area on 6th March 1977, members will have the opportunity to observe --

1. Areas controlled burnt in chosen weather, i.e., leaving green canopy.
2. Areas burnt by a wild fire, i.e., complete destruction.
3. Areas burnt in late evening (control period), i.e., badly scorched trunks only.

I am sure we are all very concerned that our local forests and forest parks are retained as ecological units. We must, therefore, look very closely into the result of fuel reduction in our forests and the effects of wild fires, so that we are sure that the best possible methods are used to reduce the devastation of wild fires.

S. Bedggood.

GARDENER'S PRAYER.

O Lord, grant in some way

It may rain every day, say from about midnight till three o'clock in the morning;

But you see, it must be gentle and warm, so that it can soak in;

Grant at the same time that it would not rain on Campion, Alyssum, Helianthemum, Lavender and others, that

You know in your infinite wisdom are drought-loving plants -

I will write their names on a slip of paper if you like - And grant that the sunshine all day long, but not

Everywhere (not, for instance, on Spirea or on Gentian, Plantain Lily, and Rhododendron), and not too much;

That there may be plenty of dew and little wind,

Enough worms, no plant-lice and snails, no mildew, and that once a week,

Thin liquid manure may fall from heaven.

Amen.

Editorial Panel: S. Bedggood, G. Binns,
B. Gray.

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